CIA asked columnist to kill invasion story

Columnist Jack Anderson said in Portland on Monday he would not have released a controversial column detailing preparation of a proposed U.S. invasion of Iran if the CIA had put in writing that its publication would jeopardize national security.

But Stansfield Turner, head of the CIA, refused to do so, Anderson said. The controversial column ran on Aug. 18 in newspapers around the country, including The Journal.

"Turner called me and said if I ran the column I would compromise national security," Anderson said. But he said Turner refused to put his concerns in writing and therefore he decided to go ahead with the report.

Anderson had referred to the possibility of an invasion in earlier columns, mentioning that the Russians apparently were aware of such activity.

The Washington, D.C., columnist is here for an address sponsored by the Oregon Episcopal School.

He told editors of The Journal that Republicans are worried the Carter administration will spring an "October surprise" to boost the incumbent's re-election bid.

"The Republicans are sufficiently concerned that they have put together a task force to see if they can determine what it might be, and then possibly discount it," he said.

He said it could be another effort to rescue the hostages, even though Iran and Iraq are at war and the Soviets have warned the United States to stay out of the two countries.

The widely syndicated Anderson called the Carter administration "the most inept I have seen in my 32 years in Washington."

But he said he has no great enthusiasm for Ronald Reagan, the GOP standard bearer.

"Carter has some bright people, but they don't have any authority," he said.

He said the incumbent, like President Nixon, distrusts the so-called "Washington establishment" and takes all his advice from his "Georgia cabinet.

"To a distrubing extent, Carter is very much like Nixon," said Anderson. "Both men are introverted and tended to run the country from a glass bubble."